

STATEMENT OF SENATOR STROM THURMOND (D-SC) FOR RADIO, MARCH 27, 1959

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

We have with us here today in the Senate Studio in Washington, Mr. Hugh Agnew, the President of the South Carolina Farm Bureau, and Mr. B. Frank Williamson, a Chairman of the Tobacco Committee of the Farm Bureau of Darlington. We are delighted to have these gentlemen here. Mr. Agnew, will you tell us what brings you to Washington.

Mr. Agnew: "I came today, Senator, to support the Jennings Bill which is designed to stabilize the price of flue-cured tobacco."

Senator Thurmond: "Will you tell us why you are supporting that bill?"

Mr. Agnew: "Because we - tobacco growers in South Carolina think that that is the best proposal that has yet been devised to stabilize the price of flue-cured tobacco and stop the spiral upward caused by lower prices for the farm commodities."

Senator Thurmond: "You feel that in the long run it would be to the advantage of the farmers if the Jennings Bill is passed."

Mr. Agnew: "I do."

Senator Thurmond: "Mr. Williamson, you are Chairman of the Tobacco Committee in South Carolina, are you in accord with Mr. Agnew's views? If so, tell us your position."

Mr. Williamson: "Yes, I certainly am. I think/^{we}the tobacco farmers realize that we are going to have to be reasonably competitive

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in the foreign markets to keep those markets."

Senator Thurmond: " I see. Well, we are delighted to have you both here and give your opinions on the tobacco bill now pending in the House. Now, Mr. Agnew, I would like to ask you another question. Sometime ago, I believe, you were up here and supported the cotton acreage allotment transfers. Is that correct?"

Mr. Agnew: "That is right."

Senator Thurmond: "Will you tell us about that bill?"

Mr. Agnew: "Well, Senator, it doesn't make much difference this year because cotton allotments are frozen for 1959, but after this year there is no adequate provision whereby acreage not wanted may be used by some other farmer and I'm very happy that the Senate Committee has recently reported a bill that I testified in support of in February."

Senator Thurmond: "That's fine, and we certainly hope that that bill will pass too. Mr. Williamson, I presume that you are in accordance with Mr. Agnew's position on this matter too."

Mr. Williamson: "Yes, sir."

Senator Thurmond: "Now, Mr. Agnew, the boll-weevil has cost the cotton farmers of the South millions of dollars. Don't you think it would be well if additional money was spent on research to try to eliminate the boll-weevil?"

Mr. Agnew: "Yes, Senator Thurmond, I definitely do. The Agriculture Committee of the House Appropriations Committee is holding a hearing at this moment and Mr. Robert R. Coker of Hartsville is appearing in support of additional funds for research

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for a boll-weevil eradication program and the South Carolina Farm Bureau and its resolutions adopted last November support that procedure."

Senator Thurmond: "Out West they don't seem to have the boll-weevil and it puts the South at a ~~very~~^{great} disadvantage to grow cotton to compete with areas that do not have the boll-weevil and we sincerely hope that something can be done along this line. We all are vitally interested in helping our farmers. Now, Mr. Agnew, you favor the conservation reserve program, don't you.?"

Mr. Agnew: "Yes."

Senator Thurmond: "We are hopeful that that will be continued. Someone has suggested that the acreage be increased from 28 to 40 million ~~acres~~^{favor} acres. ~~What~~ Would you ~~say~~ that?"

Mr. Agnew: "I would favor^a/provision for that so long as it continues on a voluntary contractual basis. There is nothing compulsory about it and if a farmer wants to use it, all right."

Senator Thurmond: "Now Mr. Agnew, what is the position of the Farm Bureau on big spending?"

Mr. Agnew: "Well, we think definitely that the Federal budget and our State budget should be balanced and spending should be curtailed and I would like to commend you, sir, on behalf of the farm people of South Carolina for your firm stand against expanded expenditures at the Federal level."

Senator Thurmond: "Well, thank you very much. I am proud that you and the farmers of the State agree with my position on this matter. What is the position of the Farm Bureau on States Rights?"

Mr. Agnew: "Well, we are 100 per cent for States Rights, and

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know that you are and we hope you will continue to be that way.

THURMOND: Thank you very much. We are delighted to have you here, Mr. Agnew, and you too, Mr. Williamson. We wish the Farm Bureau continued success in the great work it is doing for the farmers of South Carolina. This is Strom Thurmond in Washington.